

Zika Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) Discussion: What the Public Needs When Risks Are Uncertain

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What the public seeks from your communication

Five public desires

- 1. Gain wanted facts.
- 2. Empower decision making.
- 3. Be involved as a participant, not spectator.
- 4. Provide watch guard over resource allocation.
- 5. Recover or preserve well-being and normalcy.

Risk Communication Principles for Emergencies

Under promise and over deliver....

Instead of making promises about outcomes, express the uncertainty of the situation and a confident belief in the <u>process</u> to fix the problem and address public safety concerns.

What the Public Will Ask First

- Are my family and I safe?
- What have you found that may affect me?
- What can I do to protect myself and my family?
- Who caused this?
- Can you fix it?

Six Principles of CERC

- Be First: If the information is yours to provide by organizational authority—do so as soon as possible. If you can't—then explain how you are working to get it.
- Be Right: Give facts in increments. Tell people what you know when you know it, tell them what you don't know, and tell them if you will know relevant information later.
- Be Credible: Tell the truth. Do not withhold to avoid embarrassment or the possible "panic" that seldom happens. Uncertainty is worse than not knowing—rumors are more damaging than hard truths.

Six Principles of CERC

- Express Empathy: Acknowledge in words what people are feeling—it builds trust.
- Promote Action: Give people things to do. It calms anxiety and helps restore order.
- Show Respect: Treat people the way you want to be treated—the way you want your loved ones treated—always—even when hard decisions must be communicated.

Trust and Mistrust

- Stakeholders judge the response to an issue or crisis based on trust.
- Trust is the natural consequence of promises fulfilled.
- Mistrust is an outgrowth of the perception that promises were broken and values violated.
- CDC fulfills trust by combining our best science with strong ethics and values.

Consequences of Mistrust

- Health recommendations ignored and disease and death go up.
- Demands for misallocation of resources.
- Public health policies circumvented.
- Opportunists prey on others in the "trust gap."
- Fiscal and medical resources are wasted.

We can't accomplish our mission.

Acting Trustworthy

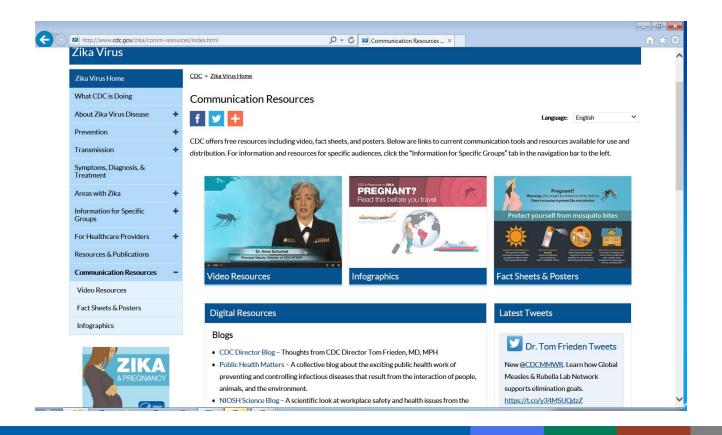
- Share information early.
- Acknowledge the concerns of others.
- Under promise and over deliver.
- Select a spokesperson who is never condescending.
- Engage third-party validators and advocates.

Risk Communication Resources

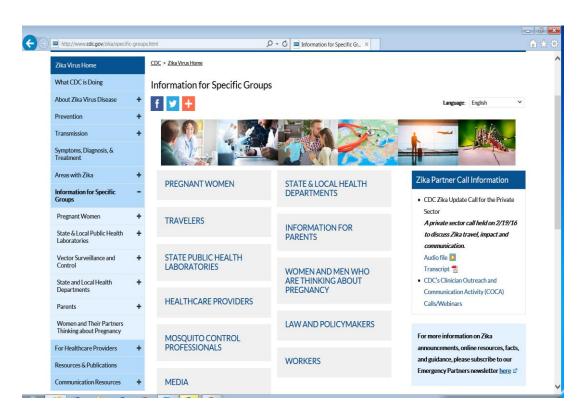
- CDC Zika website: http://www.cdc.gov/zika/
- Zika communications resources: http://www.cdc.gov/zika/comm-resources/index.html
- CERC resources: http://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/index.asp
- Emergency Risk Communication Training: Atlanta, August 10-12, 2016
- To sign up for the Emergency Partners newsletter to receive Zika and other updates from the CDC, please click <u>here</u>
- Contact <u>cercrequest@cdc.gov</u> for questions

For the latest communication resources, check

http://www.cdc.gov/zika/comm-resources/index.html



To find information on specific groups, click http://www.cdc.gov/zika/specific-groups.html



For more information, contact CDC 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) TTY: 1-888-232-6348 www.cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

